1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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dried armadillo skin is scraped with a large bean-like seed; in the same manner as I have seen the negroes of the West Indies scrape a roughened calabash with a bone. The dancers clasp each other over the shoulder, around the waist, or hook arms; both sexes taking part in the dancing, but not in the singing or drumming, these being the especial province of the men. The steps are usually about three forward and to one side, and then the same number backward. When arranged in a circle, this carries them gradually around the musicians. When in a straight line, they keep on the same spot. The songs are a sort of recitative, sometimes impromptu, sometimes of fixed words; the chorus a sort of "fol-de-rol," a series of meaningless syllables. These songs for dancing must not, however, be confounded with the sacred songs of the priests, of which I shall have occasion to make fuller mention in the proper place.

The dances are kept up nearly all, and sometimes all night at the funeral feast; the participants retiring from time to time and sleeping an hour or two when exhausted, and returning with renewed vigor to chicha drinking, eating, and dancing. It is particularly on these occasions, when the older people are too drunk, or too busy to keep strict watch, that the younger folks manage to evade their vigilance and ——. These eminently practical courtships almost invariably precede the asking of the father's consent by the would-be bridegroom.

After more than two weeks of this license and debauchery, during which three cows, about a dozen pigs, hundreds of bunches of plantains, several quintals of rice, and hundreds of gallons of chicha had been devoured, the *bi-ka-kru* or steward announced that the commissary had given out and the riot must come to an end. I was notified according to previous agreement and went at the time appointed. As distinguished guests, our party of four were shown to the best hammocks, where we were seated, and in a few minutes served with cups of chocolate. In a little while, all of the priests seated themselves on low benches, the leader in the middle. The lay chorus singers were ranged in a double line facing each other and below the priests. The fire was carefully carried from its place under the corpse and piled almost between the feet of the principal priest. All drank chocolate and the priests sounded their rattles. The leader began a low dirge-like song in the sacred jargon, which I was told described in detail the journey of the defunct to the other world. It told of the dangerous rivers he had to cross, where alligators lay in wait to devour him; of the great serpents who disputed his path; of the high hills he had to climb with weary steps; of the fearful precipices he must scale; of the beautiful birds with sweet songs, compared with which even the flute-like *silguero* was as a crow; of the gorgeous butterflies that lightened up the path like flying flowers, and finally of his safe arrival at the country of the great *Si-bu*, where he would have nothing to do but eat, drink, sleep, and enjoy himself.

The song was divided into stanzas, and the priests all followed the lead of their chief, the words being a series of set phrases, but in a language

1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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766 [533] in part unintelligible to the uninitiated. At the end of each stanza was a chorus, where the priests, who during the stanza kept time with their rattles, now gave a peculiar twirl, and the lay singers joined in the chorus.

As the song approached its end, the leader was furnished with a big gourd of steaming chocolate, holding about a quart. As he finished, landing the dear departed safe beyond further troubles, he announced it with a most unearthly yell, in which all hands joined; he at the same time turning the chocolate over the fire, totally extinguishing it. The party at once arose and for a minute or two all was bustle and confusion of preparation.

[767] [783] A person, whose office it is to handle the dead, endeavored to lower the bundle but it was a little out of his reach. Nobody else could touch it for fear of defiling himself. To lend a hand would have cost an Indian three days of purification. I drew my long knife, which all learn to carry in this country, as an actual necessity; and with a couple of blows cut the fastenings and brought the little cane rack, bundle of bones and all, tumbling into the outstretched arms of the official, with much more haste than solemnity. Nobody seemed shocked, and being a foreigner, and withal a medicine man, who had made cures where their best doctors had failed, I was of course impregnable to *bu-ku-ru'*. The aforesaid official now lashed the package to its stick, and two long slender strings of loosely twisted cotton were tied to the head of the package.

[123] [587] Santiago had had three wives. One of them had re-married to his successor; but there were two remaining in widowhood. A procession was formed. First came the priests with their rattles. Next the chorus singers with their drums. Next the corpse, borne by two men, and preceded by the two widows, each holding the end of one of the cotton strings, leading the dead, as it were, to his final resting-place. Next ourselves, as the most distinguished persons present, and escorted by the two chiefs. Behind us came the older men, and following them the usual rag, tag, and bob-tail of young men, women, boys, and persons of no account generally. Some of the boys however, true to boy nature, were as usual irrepressible, and instead of keeping decorously in place, skirmished ahead, and on the flanks of the procession, mounting stumps, logs, or other commanding points to take in the general effect of the pageant. As the procession filed out of the house, some old chicha jars [768] were carried out and ostentatiously broken; but I observed that nothing of real value was destroyed. As soon as the line got fairly under way, the priests struck up another song which was kept up until the procession halted.

Everybody had been on so long a debauch that it was decided to take a rest of three or four days before the party started off. But it was necessary that the bones should be removed from the house. A temporary ranch had therefore been built a few hundred yards distant; and to this the remains were carried and deposited until the bearers were in a fit condition to proceed.

tired of playing, one of the spotted tigers killed her, and they all ate her, all of her, until not even a drop of blood was left to tell the tale. 539

The watcher was so frightened that he could not get down from the tree until the following day. The rest of the tribe also came at daybreak to find and to talk to him who had witnessed the death of the woman who because she became pregnant by her brother furnished the example for the law that whoever should copy this act would be severely punished.

## *THE ARTS*

contact with the Chiriquíans. The *zambombia* is a hollowed stick divided inside into separate compartments. The divisions are made with pieces of the pejibaye palm. The same black seeds used in the *maracas* are put in these compartments, and the *zambombia* is moved backward and forward to produce noise. In the village there is one accordion which also is played at celebrations. 534

The music on these occasions is almost entirely copied from the Chiriquíans who in turn have received a considerable negro influence. Waltzes are also popular, and some foxtrots are heard. 533 [177]

**Dancing.** The *Boruca* are said to have secret dances. Their two public dances, if so they may be called, that are not copied from the Chiriquíans, are the "bullfight" and the *negritos*. The "bullfight" takes place on New Year's Day. A balsa (*Ochroma Lagopus* Sw.) mask of a huge bull's head painted in black with white lines, and with the horns and the upper part of the skull from a real bull, is put over a framework of a curved piece of wood that has a supporting wooden cross piece. This helps the whole to project from the head of the wearer in the manner of a real bull's head. The mask is usually worn by one of the young bloods of the village. Another man wears a balsa mask of one face with a little face on the chin, suggesting a dual personification (see fig. 10, *b*). These are the only two "characters." Almost all the men in the village, however, put on balsa masks of various types, some with gaily colored paper pasted on the surface, some painted, and some perfectly plain. The 535 [532]

173 166 [162] tent that this small valley could not support the inhabitants. Some left for the site of China Kichá and there were joined by more people from Talamanca. We estimate that there are about 700 Indians within the area of Ujarrás and China Kichá.

101 144 Other Sites. There is a relatively strong percentage of Talamancan blood remaining in the people of the Reventazón Valley, but there are none of the Talamancan living habits left. Here at Orosi, and farther north at Cachí and Tucurrique, are descendents of the Cabécares from the Coen region. Tres Rios, in the Central Plateau, was originally settled by Bribri and Cabécar Indians brought there by the colonial government in 1747.[45] Similarly, at Cangel in Guanacaste, there are some few Bribri relationships.[46] The presence of this blood in these areas is due to the transferral of many Talamancans by the government of Costa Rica as penalty for four uprisings, the first three between 1610 and 1619 and the last in 1709, which resulted in the destruction of the Franciscan missions and the massacre of Spanish men and women.[47] In these sections of displaced peoples, acculturation has been triumphant and there is next to nothing to suggest the aboriginal connections of the inhabitants of these places beyond the ordinary characteristics of the mestizo.

648 167 101 [669] [799] [177]

## *LANGUAGE*

197 [191] the Chirripó who are not neighbors and have little or no contact with Bribri. Few Bribri, however, do the same with Cabécar. In this respect, nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the vocabulary used by the Bribri when dealing with sacred subjects, prayers, or myths is almost totally Cabécar. Ancient songs, on the other hand, are often sung by the Bribri

[533] [784]

Organization.)

[45] Fernández, 1907, vol. IX, pp. 491–92.

[46] Fernández, 1889, pp. 379–80.

[47] Fernández, 1883, vol. III, pp. 325–26, ftn. 7; 1886, vol. V, pp. 162–215.

[48] Lehmann, 1920, vol. I, pp. 178–356; Mason, 1940, pp. 76–77.

184
197 in Térraba (Tiribi), a custom pointing to the former contact in times long past between the
● [535] two groups. It is common for a singer not to understand the words that he is singing, giving as an excuse that they are from "the grandfathers" in "their old language." This is the outstanding characteristic of the Bribri. From pre-Columbian times, he appears to have been a culture borrower and he certainly is today. This is particularly true with respect to nonmaterial culture and is not only noted in many of their songs and religious manifestations but
[535] also in their dances (*see* Dances), especially on the Pacific slope.

114 The most complete studies of the Bribri tongue have been made by Pittier and Lehmann.[49] Schuller, of course, includes all Costa
[197] Rican languages in his Maya-Carib-Arawak complex.[50] With reference to the Cabécar speech, outside of Lehmann, Gabb and Thiel are the only sources to produce more than a passing vocabulary.[51]

212 **Linguistic Symbols.** Throughout this study,
104 indigenous terms are written in symbols which are used by the Cabécares and Bribri in their schools when writing their mother tongue. They are based on a study made by Ricardo Pozas of the *Instituto Indigenista Nacional of Mexico* and checked by Dr. Mark Hanna Watkins who was lent to the Costa Rica government by the *Instituto Indigenista Nacional of Guatemala* for this express purpose. It is the alphabet actually in use in the Indian schools in Costa Rica. Except for certain distinct symbols, the majority are those found in the international phonetic alphabet.[52]

[194] The greater portion of the following explanation is a free translation of the key to the symbols used in the Cabécar primer[53] (*ʒis mą ˈilə*) written by Ricardo Pozas Arciniéga.

194 ə is a central vowel which is pronounced as the vowel in the word "but" in English. This vowel varies up to a high front position, and is frequently substituted by the vowel *u* in many words.

*ą, ɛ, į, ǫ, ų*, nasalized vowels.

[49] Pittier, 1898; Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1.
[50] Schuller, 1928.
[51] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1; Gabb, 1875; Thiel, 1884

767 or a possum. There is a well-regulated course which one must adhere to before one can achieve this position. The fee for this is paid [965] to the teacher (who is, of course, a recognized Burier) in foodstuffs, such as pigs, *bavas* of yucas, etc. Plus the study, there are twenty- [262] two days of rigid diet when meat, salt, and chocolate cannot be used. After this, the aspirant must act as assistant five times, four of [785] which demand fasting, and for two days of which he cannot use his hands to eat nor to touch his face. The training of the novice begins at four o'clock in the morning when he must bathe with his teacher who is the only person he is allowed to see. He cannot touch another man or woman and must live during [343] this period in a hut of banana leaves which he himself must build. The teacher likewise is not allowed to touch others, and must hand the food to his pupil from afar. This in itself must be in *bijagua* leaves and cannot have contact 787 with the human hand. One of the tests is for 767 the novice to go with the teacher at three o'clock in the morning and cut a staff. Both put a string around one wrist and around each staff. Then the master sticks his pole in the ground and attaches the string to a nearby tree. The aspirant copies this act. If both cuttings grow, it is a sign that the novice will live long and bury many people. If one dies, it is taken for a bad omen. A full-fledged burier must 767 follow a diet the day of and after a funeral. [262] He can eat nothing but plantain (*Dominik*) and wild herbs cooked without salt.

[554] Even the younger generation on the Pacific slope respect the Buriers. The comment of an exceptionally enlightened Bribri, for example, when questioned about the necessity of the Burier at a death was: "This is the custom, as is a law, and one has to do it whether one likes it or not." In 1956, in Salitre alone, there were six Buriers. Ujarrás had three, but could use those from Salitre if their own were not available. At Ujarrás, however, all who assist at the funeral must bathe three days later at four o'clock in the morning. They must also tap the official Burier on the head with *bijagua* leaves.

767 **The Singers.** There are no longer Singers except in Chirripó. In the other regions, the ● 533 medicine man, as stated before, has taken over [756] their functions. The duties of the Singers were [775]

767 always confined to funeral ceremonies where
533 they chanted the deeds and merits of the de-
[775] ceased as well as sped the soul along on its
journey to the other world through song. The
[614] Bribri Singers came from the *stsukur* or *stu'gur* clan according to Gabb and Pittier,[105] but the elders and medicine men in 1956 claimed that they belonged to the *sibəwak*, *korrehué*, or *sinąbwak* groups. Gabb states that their office
[428] was hereditary,[106] and that they were next to the *usegLə* in importance. Pittier suggests heredity [107] and notes that they lived only by the lower Coen and had a number of assistants the highest of whom were called *ko*, and apprentices known as *siní*.[108] He adds that elaborate preparation was necessary before the title of Singer was won. This is not exactly in keeping with the idea that their position was hereditary.

[614] Cabécar Singers had to come from the following clans: *kibegruwák*, *sibəwak*, *bLeriwak*, and *sənitswa* (*see* The Clans and Myths: *Protectors of Clans*). Their name in this language is *səgLə*.

[198] Gabb,[109] speaking only about the Bribri, calls attention to the fact that the songs of *stsukur* were in a language which neither he nor the uninitiated could understand. As Lehmann has pointed out, however, the Bribri Singers were in reality a Cabécar group,[110] according to his spelling and that of Pittier, the *korrhué*. We use *korrehué* because this is the pronunciation given by the Bribri today. There is, nevertheless, another angle to this problem, particularly if one accepts the statement that the Bribri Singers could come from one of the three clans mentioned above. This
[198] is the use of a "sacred language" by the
[177] medicine men of both Talamancan peoples when singing and the adoption of foreign songs even by the laymen. These aspects will be discussed later under Curing and Songs, respectively.

764 The Pacific Bribri and Cabécares, in lieu
756 of Singers, have a ceremony called *setéluwək*
184 in Bribri which is carried out by the medicine man when someone dies (*see* First Burial).

[105] Gabb, 1875, p. 508; Pittier, 1938, p. 17.
[106] Gabb, 1875.
[107] Pittier, 1895, p. 18.
[108] Pittier, 1938, pp. 17–18. Could there be a connec-

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767 764 **The Organizer of Feasts.** This position is common to both Talamancan peoples and is covered by a single title, *bikā'kra*. One has to study to achieve it.[111] The principal tasks of the Organizer of Feasts is at the death of an individual to designate the persons who must [273] plant the maize to be used for the chicha at the time of the bone funeral; to name those who are to make it; and those who have to provide chocolate, plantains, pigs, etc., for the feast. On the Pacific slope, this position has [756] also been absorbed by the medicine man.

764 **The já.** Back in the woodland, however, where authorities and visitors are scarce, the method of handling the dead adheres to former [775] usage. Things must be prepared for the soul of the deceased. This is done by those known as the *já:* three adults if an adult died, or three girls, or three boys, such as the case may be. Cotton must be placed inside the body bundle of a woman. Combs and other ornaments are carried apart with the clothes of the dead. Even if a person has a lot of clothes, all are put in the grave. If a boy dies, a miniature bow and arrow are substituted for the cotton. But when the deceased is a man, in addition to this, they place a miniature blow gun, fish hook, and digging stick in the bundle. This [768] is done in order to leave the real ones for the family's use. A net carrying bag is also placed with the dead man.

[767] **First Burial.** When death takes over, the entire retinue of officials begin their work. Of course, customs vary depending upon the [656] geographical location. Government and eccle- [797] siastical authorities have prohibited the fundamental part of the ancient rites, that is, the keeping of the dead for a year before burial. Usually, the body is left in the house for about twenty-four hours by both the Bribri and Cabécar who are located near non-indigenous villages on the Caribbean side. The personal belongings of the deceased, either in effect or symbolically, and cacao paste are placed beside the corpse which is then wrapped in *mastate* (*see* Bark Cloth) and tied with a cotton string made especially for this purpose

[767] [533] tion between *sini* and *sinąbwak?* (*See* Social Organization.)

[110] Gabb, 1875, p. 508.
[111] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 220.
[111] Pittier, 1938, p. 17.

764 were placed at one end of the spot where the grave was to be dug in such a manner that when the wick burned out the candle lighted. At the other end, the cross was put up. When the hole was ready, the coffin was lowered and covered with dirt. Then everyone returned to their respective houses except the few people who had been near the woman at death or had accidentally touched anything near her after she died. In this case, there were only the Buriers, the apprentice, and one man.

[783] [756] These persons were considered unclean and had to be purified. The medicine man, who was also a Burier but had not assisted at the death, took over. First, he had them bathe in the river, and then, before entering the house, he put hot water in cups made of *bijagua* leaves and poured it over their hands and arms up to their elbows. Inside, chocolate, yuca, and [775] maize were left in gourds for the soul to eat when it returned in the night, and there it [765] stayed for nine days. A feast was prepared for the ninth day and the motions of saying the [777] rosary were carried out as no one really knew the entire prayer.

765 On the tenth day, the *seté hrwak* ceremony was observed. Fire was lighted with a stone and *cabuya* (*see* Fibers) wick. This was taken to the cemetery. Among the Talamancan Bribri there is a similar ritual, but the fire must be of cacao wood. Then four cacao beans, four grains of white maize, four *ayote* [825] (pumpkin) seeds, four roosters (because the dead was female, chickens are for the males), and four gourds of chicha were placed in the house for the departed soul. The number is [801] important as *sibu* (*see* Theological Beliefs) is supposed to have put four of everything in the [767] world. The task of the Singer was performed by the medicine man and the Buriers, four in all. The history of the deceased was chanted: [533] how she looked; what she did; how she played and planted; where she went on vacations or trips; what she bought and had; in truth, everything pertaining to her life. During this chant the medicine man and the Burier remained apart on two benches placed at the west. This ceremony began at 3:00 P.M. and ended at 11:00 P.M. with a feast of yuca, *tiquizque*, meat, chocolate, and chicha.

**Funeral and Bone Burial.** Attention has already been called to the custom of burying the bones

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765 of an individual a year or more after death. The best description of such an event is pre-
114 sented by Gabb who assisted at the bone burial
765 of the last famous "King of Talamanca,"
[643] Santiago. This has the historic value of an eyewitness report of a ceremony which today is impossible to duplicate, and forms an essential contribution to the cultural background of these people.[113]

765 Only in upper Talamanca and upper Chir-
[184] ripó is this type of funeral still practised, and
[652] at that secretly, because it is prohibited by the Costa Rican authorities. The dwelling of
[756] the medicine man takes the place of the "casa grande" or big house which was used for the purpose of ceremonials in connection with such burials. Here the bones are taken from the leaf bundle and wrapped in *mastate* by the Burier. Then this is placed on a long bench
533 beside the doorway. The medicine man sings,
765 mentioning *sibu* and recounting the life of the deceased and all his actions, for example: how he planted, worked, what he did, and where he went. The song also gives the reason for his death. If the dead was female, the song
[535] recounts her doings. A feast follows and some-
765 times a dance.[114] To the beat of drums (*see* Musical Instruments) and rattles, the people and the medicine man accompany the Buriers
[764] who carry the bone bundle to the graveyard. Generally, this is situated on a ridge or near the headwaters of a stream. Here are located the clan graves known as *pų*. These are deep, round holes lined with four planks of an ex-
[824] tremely hard wood (*Xanthoxylum* sp. called *surí* in Cabécar) which does not rot easily. The Bribri line the bottom with stones, but the Cabécar do not bother to do this. The Bribri are more particular than the Cabécar in that the bones should not in any way touch the earth. An additional plank is inclined over
[614] the top as further protection. Each clan has its own grave which is used until it is full.
[178] Today, however, clans that are allowed to inter-marry are buried in the same shaft. The Burier removes the planks of the grave and puts the bone package in with his hands while the medicine man sings, explaining that now the soul has gone and will never return. After-
[273] wards, he arranges the planks as before. Chicha

[113] Gabb, 1875, pp. 500-503.
[114] Pittier, 1918.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
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house. The *pejibaye* has the advantage of thorns to keep innocent children from straying into trouble, as no one except the medicine man is allowed to touch the ill. Water is kept within reach of the sick person by suspending it in a gourd from a long stick.

Lehmann[147] pointed out that the liver was considered the key to all emotions, sickness, and health. This is still true. The Cabécar phrase for happy or the state of good health signifies that the liver is in good condition. Lehmann further adds that the activities of the soul are connected with this organ.[148] On the whole, many fevers are supposed to be caused by the liver. Among the Bribri, however, influenza is credited to *bák-namá* (*see* Myths).

The principal complaints noted among these peoples are caused by intestinal parasites with subsequent anemia; conjunctivitis, especially among the Bribri; *papalomollo* or Leishmaniosis; and malaria, particularly in Talamanca. Measles, mumps, and at times smallpox and yellow fever also take a heavy toll when they occur in epidemic form.

Among the Cabécares, there are numerous cases of male perversion. No social stigma is attached nor is any cure attempted.

**Curing.** Herbs, vines, quinine bark, and other medicines prepared from flowers and berries are used.

A medicine for snake bites is made from *Dracontium Pittieri* Engl. and also from *Aristolochia sylvicola* Standley, which is mashed and cooked. This is combined with the bark of a tree called *bek* in Cabécar and is used to cause sterilization. Diets, as has been noted, form a part of many cures although they are also observed at times of death by the *usegLa* clan. The principal ceremonial and magical elements included in curing are songs (prayers), always sung with the staff and the stones. One of the prayers the medicine men of Cabécar and some of the Bribri sing to combat sickness and to foretell if the patient will live or die is given under the heading of *Sacred Songs*. To rid one of the *wimbLu*, the medicine man sings for three nights and asks *sibu* (*see* Theological Beliefs) not to allow the spirit to scare any more.

[147] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 282.
[148] Lehmann, 1920, vol. 1, p. 282.

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*589 [595] taught people how to dance and to sing the following song:

*sibu* came in the form of a buzzard
dressed as a man,
Collar on his neck.
The collar reflected,
He came with the collar
Ejené, ekujé,[199]
Ejené, eanjé,[199]
He came to give us the dance
He came from the air.
Ejené, ekujé,
Ejené, eanjé.

## A Tale of the *bukLú*

### (*Bribri*)

Two men were hunting tapir and hit one with an arrow. Suddenly, a big man appeared carrying a rifle and told them to meet him below. He went and shot and the men realized that the rifle was Thunder. A short while later, a man came with a two-headed serpent tied in a coil with pita string. He told them to follow him.

They reached a beautiful house which was a lagoon where *bukLú* lived. He ate the snake and one man was taken inside to be eaten. *bukLú* was in a hammock in the center of the house with many devils, the *kiritum*, seated beside him facing the wall in order not to look at him. The man sat by *bukLú* who proceeded to make him a medicine man.

After two months of study at night with *bukLú*, the man returned to his village. There he told his people that they should not wound [825] animals without killing them because he had to take care of them. He showed them quantities of arrows which he had taken from wounded ones.

## *sutá*

### (*Cabécar and Bribri*)

[776] *sutá* was *sibu's* grandmother. She created the first human beings from clay and kept the sperm of all human races in a basket.

[172] [199] Pre-Columbian gold figures of buzzards with a collar are frequently found in graves. The collars recall the actual bead ones of the Guaymí of Panama.

[593] [200] This has no meaning but is used for the sound and to emphasize the beat.

* 539 825 [821] warns when it is going to rain by howling in the morning and in the afternoon.

### (17) Why the Cuyeo[302] Has a Tightly Closed Beak[302]

(*Bribri*)

Once *sibu* became ill and he sent the *cuyeo* to find out if he would get well. The bird took it upon himself to consult no one but to tell *sibu* that the answer was he would die. As a punishment for this, he, *sibu*, pressed the cuyeo's beak tightly shut.

## *RECREATION*

574 484 [52] of food and drink will be offered them. Conversation, in this case, is confined almost entirely to the men or if there are women with the travelers, they speak separately with the women of the household.

517 224 226 Hunting and fishing may in a sense be classed as recreation for the men as well as part of their livelihood. Here again, except in the rare instances of community use of fish poisons, it is a family matter.

296 252 [481] [533] [574] Women and young girls of the same family, particularly among the Bribri, are fond of gathering at the side of a stream to wash clothes and grind foodstuffs. They swim and sing, praising in their songs the virtues of their respective swains (*see* Songs). This is the closest these people come to what might be termed a normal visit.

195 Cursing is not usual. The worst phrase a Bribri can use against another is:

| *bé* | *ɾɨr* | *wɛblɔ* | *suLue* | *ɛs* | *bɛ́ɨs* | *bɔmitsɛn.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| you | are | man | bad | like | devil | take (carry off). |

The really unpleasant word here is *suLue* which means bad or ugly and is applied as a curse. A milder term is *bikési* which means useless, lazy, or coward. In Cabécar, however, the equivalent of this is *sɔkɔnɛ́* which is a very strong term.

476 574 273 **Reunions.** Reunions, although pre-Columbian

[302] *See* Linguistic Texts: *lipo* (coyeo).

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traditions, are known by the Spanish term *juntas* or *bLo-ʒé* (chicha-to drink) in Bribri, or in Cabécar *di*[204]-*ʒo* (chicha-to drink). They are held when there is need of group labor such as building a house, clearing a field, making a bridge, etc. It is the only time except at death or bone burial that groups of people meet. The person giving the *junta* must supply liberal quantities of chicha and at least sufficient food. Dancing with singing, particularly on the Caribbean side, forms part of the entertainment. On the Pacific, singing is not as

[Text continues top of P.69(B)--Analysis]

## THE ARTS

**Musical Instruments.** Upright drums are the preferred instruments of Talamanca. In pre-Columbian graves they are found fashioned of clay and occur from miniature sizes to three feet in height. Today they are made of palm or cedar with one end covered with iguana skin and the other end open. The skin is fastened to the wood with a glue made from the red fruit of the *butsí* tree and is then tied with *pita*. Their size varies from two and a half to three feet and they are played by hand. Formerly a small all-wooden drum with a U-shaped slit[205] was used at the burial of chiefs. These were played with a bone or a stick. The people on the Pacific side do not have the upright drum but use the Chiricano *caja* or round drum of palm wood covered at both ends with wild boar skin and played with two sticks.

In Talamanca, and as a rule in all *jawá* houses, armadillo shells are rubbed with a stick while those of land turtles are used in a similar manner or as clappers. The conch shell is made into a horn to relay messages but not for a musical instrument. Rattles of gourds filled with seeds or pebbles and with fowl bone or wooden handles are also seen.

**Tempo.** There are varied beats for the upright drum: 4 short and 1 long; 3 short and 1 long; 2 short and 1 long. As many as twenty drums were played at one time in Talamanca when the Singer functioned. On the Pacific side, the old pieces are seldom heard. The

[Text continues middle of P.69(B)--Analysis]

[205] *di* is also the word for water and is often used for river.

476 574 273 [184] [534] common and the accordions, guitars, and the round drum or *caja* take the place of the aboriginal upright drum (*see* The Dance). The guests, who wear their best clothing (*see* Adornment), repay their host by giving their labor free until the project is completed. These affairs are noted for the excessive drinking. [578] Few if any fights occur, however, and the over-intoxicated as a rule simply fall asleep guarded by his female companions or vice-versa, and the joint work of the men begins as usual the following day lasting until noon.

## *THE ARTS*

The

533 535 [534] majority of the dances and music consist of the Chiricano *son*, *punta*, and the waltz. The accompaniment is formed by an accordion, guitar, or violin and the round drum.

535 **Dances.** There are many different dances, both in connection with ceremonies and for sheer pleasure. The Bribri in particular have the greatest number of secular dances which [476] are performed at gatherings called *juntas* usually held to build a house, fell a clearing, or some such joint labor where friends come in to help. Many of the songs that accompany the dances are in a language not understandable [198] to the singers. Some are sung in Térraba. There are two traditional dance methods: in a line or in a circle. The circle type is called *buLik-Lak*. If drums accompany the performers, they remain outside of the ring. Arms are raised horizontally and interlocked. The first movement consists of one step to the right side and a short one to the left with the body inclined slightly forward. The second movement starts in a similar fashion but the beat changes and the two steps are more marked, the second ending in a small jump or hop. Suddenly, the dancers go in the opposite direction and continue with the second movement only. The sideward hop necessarily makes the circle go forward and backward. In the *surbon*, a circle dance, the ring is formed first by men and then women put their heads between the arms of the men and all participate.

There are a number of line dances, for

[888] Gabb, 1875, p. 517.

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535 example, *burére* is performed by a line of men; *busiki* is with men and women in the same line; *buLtakuLe* is usually a line of men but there may be one of women. When one sex dances, the arm is interlocked at the elbow with the next in line. Women and men put their hand on the shoulder of the person in front. The single line step is the first one used in the circle dance. Twenty people or less participate in these lines. The drum is held under the arms [533] of the male dancers. Females do not play them.

535 773 The common dances among the Bribri are those of the buzzard and the monkey. Each has its own explanation. The first one is said to have originated because the boss of the buzzards went to *sibu* to learn to sing and dance. He learned and came to earth wearing a collar and showed man how to sing and dance (*see* Theological Myths: *The Dance*). Some versions hold that it was *sibu* himself in the form of a buzzard who did this and not the boss of these birds. He wore a collar and taught human beings to dance in a circle because the buzzards after eating fly in a circle.[206] When he finished his task, he retired to where the sun lives.

The monkey dance is supposed to have been taught to man by the grandfather of the Congo monkey who learned this from *sibu*. Its prime purpose is to have man happy (*see* Lay Songs: *buL-ikLək*).

535 342 532 Another celebration to do with happiness and good luck is seen in Talamanca among the Bribri when a new home is to be occupied. The whole ceremony is known as *itsó* (*see* Songs), taking its name from the *disaplina* palm (*itsó* or *kɨmat* in Bribri; *Chamaedorea* sp.) from which the mask is made today. The beard of the face is Spanish moss. After the inauguration of a house, the mask, which is supposed to assure the longevity of the family who are to inhabit the new home, is hidden and the celebrants have to hunt for it before the dance can be performed.

535 224 533 Segarra and Julía[207] describe a hunter's

[776] [172] [171]

[206] This interpretation of God in buzzard form wearing a collar is reflected in the gold figures found in ancient graves. The style and form of the collars associated with these figures are similar to the bead ones used today by the Guaymí Indians of northwestern Panama.

535 dance which was performed in a circle by men
224 and women with one person singing but the
533 whole group joining in the chorus. The song recounted the experiences during a hunt.

535 There are various dances held in connection
764 with death and burial but they are seldom seen
184 today outside of upper Talamanca.

765 Pittier[208] mentions a bone dance performed at the time of secondary burial by men if the deceased was an adult and by women if a child. The bone dance witnessed by the writer was carried out by a line of women and one of men. The person taking the place of the
533 Singer (*see* Death) chanted the life history of the departed, and kept time with a gourd rattle. His four assistants in the line of men had drums under their arms which they beat as they danced.

756 A different bone dance which is a remnant
727 of a war dance with trophy heads is occasionally performed when the medicine man is feeling particularly sure of himself and wants to celebrate. Men and women form a circle with interlocked arms. It is said that skulls were
178 once balanced on the arms. Today, nothing is placed there. The men sing and the women join in the chorus singing *ékéké* meaning "good" or "well."

533 **Songs.** All sacred songs are basically Cabécar even though they may be sung in Bribri. The Medicine Man and sometimes the Burier
198 sing these songs which are usually in ancient Cabécar and are not understood by the masses.

Lay songs are common to the Bribri and very rare among the Cabécar. The Bribri delight in inventing songs to fit the occasion. Both men and women like to sing and do so on the slightest provocation when working, bathing, washing, or minding the baby. The addition of words only for their sound is
197 characteristic. Likewise, many Térraba words are found in Bribri songs, the meaning of which is unknown to the singer. In fact, the
195 sung language permits all sorts of liberties as well as having a certain vocabulary of its own.

773 western Panama. The traditional home of the Bribri
173 is in northwest Panama. *See* Stone, 1952, p. 252.

[207] Segarra y Julia, 1907, pp. 594–95.

[208] Pittier, 1938, pp. 25–26.

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Sacred Songs

(18) SINGER'S SONG[209]

(*Bribri*)

Now we're going to bring the spirit (*itsó*) from where we hid him and when we arrive with him in the house, we'll sing.

(19) *dikúswa*[210]

(*Bribri*)

[755 787] This is a song used by medicine men to fight sickness. It is sung over the sacred stones and in particular over *dikúswa*, to see if the patient will live or die. The meaning of the song is as follows:

In the beginning, *dikúswa* was a bird and *sibu* sent for him when he felt ill and asked whether he would live or die. *dikúswa* answered that *sibu* was only pretending because he would never die. *sibu* was so pleased with the reply that he left us *dikúswa* as a stone for the medicine men to use when curing.

Lay Songs

(20) THE MONKEY DANCE[211]

(*Bribri*)

[535] This song receives its name from the fact that men and women dance it in a line and interlock their arms monkey fashion. The words have nothing to do with the monkey and are a mixture of ancient Térraba, Cabécar, and Bribri.

Freely translated the theme runs:
Water turtle, bad pool,
Someone passed me, dance, dance, dance.
There is the turtle; the turtle's pool;
The devil's pool; bad pool;
Someone passed me; shell pool;
Devil pool, dance; *kúsua* dance;
Beautiful horizon, valiant child.
Dance, dance, dance.

[756] [209] *See* Linguistic Texts: *biʒɔbLɔ-kɔk-keLi*. This is today the Medicine Man's song to his staff and takes its name from that of the staff.

[210] *See* Linguistic Texts: Sacred Songs: *dikúswa*.

[211] *See* Linguistic Texts: *buLɪakuLe*.

[212] *See* Linguistic Texts: *duLeɪɔ; also* The Arts.

(21) *duLetɔ*[212]

(*Bribri*)

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● 533

Old timers, let's go;
Let's dance.
Now let's walk forward;
There's a place to see, old timers;
There's no place to see.
*masLakésLa*, the mountain, touches the river.
Let's go.

(22) Song for Cutting Wood for a House[213]

(*Bribri*)

We are going to tear down the house of *itsó*
where we went to hide
and when we reach our house with it
then we shall sing.

(23) Sister[214]

(*Bribri*)

Where sister, little ugly sister,
Where are you standing?
In what place are you coming on a raft?
Or in what place are you going.

(24) Lullaby,[215] Version 1

(*Bribri*)

Hush little one.
Don't you cry dear child
Sleep quietly
Why cry little one, baby.
Sleep, sleep, quietly sleep
Mother has gone to bring you a flower
Little ugly one, sleep quietly.

Lullaby, Version 2

(*Bribri*)

Little child, don't you cry, don't cry
While your mother goes to bring plantains.
Don't cry while your mother goes to plant cuttings.

[776]
[342]

[212] *itsó* is a spirit who doesn't die so they sing this in the belief that the house will last a long time. *See* Linguistic Texts: *itsó*.
[213] *See* Linguistic Texts: *tsɜ̀e*. This song is sung frequently by women when working.
[214] *See* Linguistic Texts: *aLaLa bùa*.

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I am going to pick yuca; to pull up *ñames*.
Don't cry little child.

### The Dove

(*Bribri*)

When the young pigeon flew in the world
Now he wants to do the same
To fly also as the young pigeon flew
I am
So that you hear that I am on this earth.

### Song

(*Bribri*)

Now it is day, I am going to sing
because it is day,
Saying goodbye to my people here,
I sing to my people so that they will
hear me.

### (25) The Bird[216]

(*Bribri*)

This is your child who stays,
Go to the mountain as I go.
You, buzzard, on your dry road
And I, buzzard, on my dry road
I try, you try to reach the shores of the sea.
You go with a good wind and I go also in the
dawn.
Sea where you go;
Wind where you go.

### (26) On the Back[217]

(*Bribri*)

He who doesn't command, puts on the back a
little monkey,
He who doesn't command, puts on the back a
white-faced monkey and a little periquette,
He who doesn't put on the back an important
person,
They have put him on the back,
Great *sibu* has been put on the back.

[216] *See* Linguistic Texts: *du*.
[217] *See* Linguistic Texts: *itiŋa tsé*.
[218] *See* Linguistic Texts: *dina dinamį*. This has the character of a calling song, or one to boost one's ego.
[219] *See* Linguistic Texts: *bLó* (chicha) *tse* (song).

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### (27) Water-Jaguar[218]

(*Bribri*)

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The water-jaguars want to eat.
Don't be afraid.
There are many jaguars who want to eat.
Don't be afraid of them.

### (28) Chicha Song[219]

(*Bribri*)

What's the matter with the way you're thinking!
Is it that you think I cannot grind
either chicha or chilate?
Then take this as if it were like good chicha grinders make,
Not like a poor person holding a gourd,
Not like one who doesn't grind chicha,
And listen to what I have to say.

### (29) Fighting Song[220]

(*Bribri*)

The grasshopper and the alligator ate one another;
I am not afraid.
The large snakes ate one another;
I am not afraid.
The large alligator ate the grasshopper.
The large snake ate the grasshopper.
I am not afraid.

### (30) Cemetery Song[221]

(*Bribri*)

We'll try to see if we can lift the stones and logs.
We'll put them on our shoulders as men.
We're going to try.
We'll lift the log as a tiger,
We'll lift the log as an alligator,
We'll lift the log as *serike*,
Drinking our chicha to get strength as men,
We'll sing all of us boys.

[154]
[578]

[218] This song is sung when one is angry and out of patience.
[219] *See* Linguistic Texts: *iyjjpok-tsi*. This song is in a sense a challenge to fight.
[220] *See* Linguistic Texts: *apé tsok*.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962

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## (31) Lullaby[222]

(*Cabécar*)

Rock-a-bye baby, sleep,
Little mother went to look for flowers.
We must sleep before little mother comes home.

[222] *See* Linguistic Texts: *ɜabaLá pabLeuq*.

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962

[P. 73(8)]

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Cabecar

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## (32) Planting Song[222]

(*Cabécar*)

Let's go to work
Let's go to plant corn
Plant the corn well
When it's planted we'll leave.

[222]*See* Linguistic Texts: *tks.*

## *LINGUISTIC TEXTS*

114 Attention has been called to the studies of Lehmann and Pittier (*see* Language) on the Bribri language and Lehmann on Cabécar although vocabularies have been collected by others including Gabb. The most common phonemes which we have
194 been able to discern in Bribri are: a, ą, á, é, ę, ę́, ə, i, í, o, u, ú, ų, k, L, bL, tL, t, ts. Adjectives are made by morphemes while many verbs seem to be derived from a
193 noun or an adjective and a verb. There are 42 common morphemes among which we cite: au, bá, dí, do, du, ea, ie, jé, ka, kə, ká, ki, kį, kú, Li, ŋę, me, mu, ta, tą, tá, te, té, tə, sa, se, si, su, uk, ųk, še.

In Cabécar, possessive pronouns are generally prefixes and prepositions are suffixes. The prefix *ŋa-* is employed to change verbs to nouns. There is less use
194 of the stop and almost none of aspirants or barely audible sounds which are characteristic of Bribri. The Cabécar language has recently been studied by Aziel and
114 Marian Jones. The report appears in the second volume of the "Proceedings of the 33rd International Congress of Americanists."[114]

193 They find that in the language heard in Chirripó there are 31 segmental phonemes, 20 consonants, and 11 vowels. The following is taken from their report:

194 > The syllable in Chirripó is the unit of tone placement. . . . The word in Chirripó may consist of a single syllable of any of the syllable types, or it may contain as many as 5 syllables in about 40 different combinations of syllable types. . . . Within the word all single vowels may occur initial (except į, ę, ǫ), medial and final. There are 13 vowel clusters which always have either i or u as one of the segments. It must be remembered that these clusters each constitute two syllables since by definition the syllable may contain but one vowel. There are no clusters of three. Vowel clusters generally occur word-final but may occur word-medial. The only example of a word-initial cluster is the word *ia'mi* where the morpheme i — *his* is prefixed to a'mi *mother*. Eight of the vowel clusters contain i as one segment, four contain u, and one contains both u and i. The specific distribution is as follows: of the group containing i (ie, ei, ia, ją, ąi, ai, oi, io) all occur final and ia and oi may also occur medial; of the group containing u (ue, eu, ua, ųą) all occur medial except ua, and all occur final except eu; the cluster ui occurs only final. All of the vowel clusters are of relatively infrequent occurrence in comparison with the single vowels.

Bribri and Cabécar make frequent use of prefixes and suffixes. The double negative is common. Both languages have considerable nasalization and a tendency to use words, even though they be meaningless in the text, only for sound. Likewise, a syllable or letter of a word often is incorporated in another and stands for the complete word or term. A great part of the vocabulary employed by the
195 medicine man in recounting myths is unintelligible to the layman. Songs also
● 533 generally have terms distinct from those used in conversation, especially the sacred
*539 or curing chants of the *jawá*. It is usual for Bribri songs to contain ancient Térraba
[198] (Tiribí), which is not understandable to the present day populace.

[114] Jones, 1959.

LINGUISTIC TEXTS

*539 2. "Oh Uncle," he asked, "Give me [something] to smoke." Tobacco came, tobacco for production for earth.

17. The Cuyeo (*Bribri*)

1. To cure for the first [time], then *sibu* became sick. Then *sibu* ordered the cuyeo called to cure him. Then *sibu* ordered the cuyeo to sing for the first [time].

2. The cuyeo went first to cure. Then he went to sing. Alone, he did not know if he would die. In the morning [of the following day *sibu*] asked him, "Will I die?"

3. The cuyeo answered, "Yes, you will die." Because of this *sibu* pressed the mouth of the cuyeo for lying.

## Sacred Songs

18. The Staff of the Thinkers[291] (*Bribri*)

1. Now we are going [to hear it] sing.
We are going to bring *itsɟ* [from] where we went to hide him, to bring him again.

2. [When] we arrive again inside the house, then we are going to sing with *itsɟ*.

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2. "anaą́," isuebškaLa,[293] "mų-suešo." duą́-bitę́, duą́-uąLowa[295] iriria.[294]

17. šipo

1. ę́ tsą́ kuLę́isúk,[296] etą sibu kirínawą. étą sibutə šipo kié ébuaųk[298] męLę. étą sibutə šipo patkęmį. ę́ tsą́ kuLę́itsúk.

2. šipo mią i-tsą́ kuLę́isúk. étą i-mią tsok.[297] emę kéwą iujchenę, tə[299] i-ruówami. buLame-tą sibutə ichake i-ątə, "šə-ruówąmi?"

3. šipo iątté, "tó bu-ruówąmi." ę́ kuggį sibutə šipo jkó tuwą i-wəbLar kąchok.

18. bišəbLə-kar-keLi[300]

1. ęmatą́ somį́ uiųchó.
somį́ itsǫ́ tsą́k wę sorá ibLókwą,
ę itsųk męLę.

2. dé-męLę wę́ke,[299] étą somíketkę́ tsok itsǫ́ wə́s.

[195] [756]

[291] "Thinkers" signifies "medicine men."
[292] Medicine man's term.
[293] The sense of this is that the tobacco was grown near where *sibu* was.
[294] This is a medicine man's term used in theological tales or songs. In lay tales or when talking *iš́ak* means "land" or "earth."
[195] [755] [533]
[295] This word is a combination of *kuLí* (to cure) and *isák* or *itsák* (to sing). Singing is an important aspect of curing and the two words are often used as one to denote curing.
[296] This only means to cure.
[297] The lay word "to sing" is *tsą́k* or *tsok*.
[298] *a* here in front of *i* signifies "if."
[756] [299] The Bribri consider this title as one word signifying the songs of the medicine man at night to his staff. The complete phrase is equivalent to "the staff of the medicine man."
[300] *a* is "house." This word means "within the house."

## APPENDIX II: MUSICAL SCORES OF TWO BRIBRI SONGS